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THE

UNIVERSITY AGITATION

EXPOSED;

IN A LETTER

TO A

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

1845.

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THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

TO A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

KINGSTON, 22D JANUARY, 1845.

SIR,

A pamphlet has just made its appearance from the Press of this city, which purports to dispose of the University Question in a very summary manner, and much to the satisfaction of the writer and his brethren of Queen's College. It is perfectly innocent of honest principle, or of anything like argument: no great compliment, you will say, to the understanding of the people of this Province, who are considered, by those who know them, to be shrewd and observing, and quite as able as the public of the other Colonies, to judge properly on any subject, when truly and correctly brought before them.

But to state his case fairly would have been total ruin to his views, and have placed every honourable mind against him; and, therefore, instead of addressing himself to the reason of his readers, he carefully eschews so formidable an adversary, and seeks to enlist the prejudices and passions, and more especially the avarice of the enemies of the Church of England in his favour, as the most promising way of gaining his object; nor, all things considered, is this course of proceeding much to be wondered at.

The population of Canada has been some time aware that Queen's College has been in a ricketty condition from its commencement, and is wretchedly conducted.—The Trustees have indeed been most unfortunate in the

selection of their Teachers; for, except one whom they found in the Province, and allured from another field of labour, they have given no proof of the slightest ability in the management of their Institution, which is at this moment deemed inferior by many to most of our District Schools.

In such pitiable circumstances, what must be done? The character of Queen's College had sunk beyond recovery, and the Faculty felt conscious, that they had neither ability nor influence to secure the confidence of Parents, or to raise it above the Grammar Schools already established in the Province.

Without means, without scholars, and without resources, or any dependence upon themselves, their case was truly hopeless, for even the distant future offered no prospect of amending their condition.

In this dilemma they looked around them for help with most unscrupulous eyes, and saw King's College proceeding with energy, wisdom, and ability, in the education of the youth of the Province, and already giving promise of what a University should be, and what it is likely to become at no distant period. They would have perhaps sickened at all this, had they possessed any such antiquated notions as delicacy or principle; but having no such qualms, they hastened to take their eyes away from such matters, and to fasten them on the endowment. This they saw was carefully managed, and already afforded a reasonable support to many Professors and Teachers. This gave them infinite comfort, and awakened a strong hope that by rancorous agitation they might be able to ensconce themselves in some corner of the University of King's College, and share largely in its emoluments, without any particular anxiety about sharing in its meritorious labours.

Now my gentle readers will admit that here was a strong temptation, and perhaps charity might allow that it was not easy to be resisted. Be this as it may, there

was no disposition to resist. On the contrary, every exertion has been made to stir up the worst passions of the human heart against the University of King's College; and all this, not that it might be made more efficient, but that it might be reduced to an equality with Queen's. In this way they have succeeded in uniting all the wasps of the Province to plunder the University of King's College, for such insects can readily devour the honey which they have neither the ability nor the inclination to make.

But it is time to turn to this formidable pamphlet which consists of thirty-six pages, and illustrates the common observation, that they who have the least principle make the greatest pretences to principle; that he is the most ready to appropriate his neighbour's property who is the loudest in exclaiming against robbery. The author modestly assumes the title of "MASTER OF ARTS," and to shew his learning gives us a Latin motto; but as he has forgotten to give us the English interpretation, and perhaps wisely, I shall give it for him with such freedom as in such cases translator's generally use:—

"Haste! haste the work we wish! for great's the prize;
From Queen's we look to King's with gloating eyes."

In his early pages the *Master of Arts* speaks of the popularity-hunter, the Legislator of mere expediency, the public man of upright intentions but narrow views,—all of whom he most incontinently condemns; but he, the Statesman, soars infinitely above such common-place aspirants to public favour, for he acts from liberal principles and pure motives, and, possessing transcendent knowledge, he is able and ready to frame the mould in which shall be cast the minds of all our future Statesmen, Legislators, Divines, Lawyers, and Physicians. But how is he to do this? Why, by the most easy process in the world,—robbing King's College of its endowment and religious character.

Like a true disciple of the modern School of Philosophy, he stops not to inquire, whether there be any impediments in the way; any prior claims to satisfy; any rights to settle, or any feelings to respect. What are Royal Charters to him but so much waste paper!—What are Government grants of land, or the tenure upon which all the landed property of Canada rests? What signify the feelings and affections of the Church of England, if all, or any, stand in the way of his schemes and projects! They do not detain him a single moment.—The faith and honour of the Sovereign,—the principles which bind man to man,—the basis of social order which is the security of property, are all thrown aside, because the Faculty of Queen's College is hungry, and the Trustees refuse them bread.

Taking it for granted, that the University of King's College must, as a preliminary step, be destroyed, the *Master of Arts* proceeds to discuss with great coolness whether the endowment should be divided or kept whole. There are, he says, deadly objections to both these schemes, and he sagely asks,—“Is the Crown or the Legislature prepared to appropriate a million currency of lands at that value for the foundation of separate Universities?” Although this be a gross exaggeration of the case, I say yes. The Crown and Legislature ought, if necessary, to preserve their honour and the public faith. Disturb the titles by which all property is held in the country, and you shake the foundations of society. But this is a manifest exaggeration: who are seeking Colleges only as yet? The Presbyterians and Methodists. It is true many other denominations will come forward, if invited; but these are all that we have to deal with at present. Now these are far inferior in numbers to the Church of England, and would require much smaller endowments. It is true the *Master of Arts* finds it convenient to diminish the number of Churchmen, and calls them only a fourth, probably a fifth; though

he well knows that, by the official returns, they are more than one-fourth, and will be found next census a full third of our population; and he chooses to forget that the endowment of King's College has been seventeen years under an improved management, and consequently is much more valuable than when granted in 1827.

To all this may be added, that many years elapsed before the endowment of King's College was sufficient to support a Collegiate Establishment; and were endowments now to be given to other Colleges, it is but reasonable that they should wait till the proceeds became by their own good management sufficient for their support. With reference to the present Receiver General, who is unnecessarily introduced by the *Master of Arts*, it may be sufficient to remark, that he has too much principle and good sense to join in the scheme which the pamphlet advocates, or to trample upon Royal grants and Charters. It is, indeed, said that the Receiver General, some years ago, required assistance to Queen's College to a certain extent from the funds of the University of King's College; which the Council of that Institution, as the price of peace, would have given him, had they possessed legal authority. But the *Master of Arts* may rest assured that the Receiver General will never consent to robbery and spoliation.

In regard to the accusations of waste and inefficiency on the part of the College Council; of flagrant injustice, if disposed to keep their own property; and of their stealing a march on the other denominations; and a selfish disregard of any interest but their own,—as no proofs are offered, no refutation is required; at the same time it were easy to prove them slanderous and untrue.

On dividing the endowment, the *Master of Arts* is more elaborate, because he fears that the share of Queen's would be comparatively small, now that the Free Church has taken away the majority of his people; but his logomachy on the subject—for argument there is none—is

thoroughly unworthy of attention. There is, nevertheless, some little feeling in this portion of the pamphlet which must not be passed over; for he talks of men of high attainments, such as the *Master of Arts*,—and he no doubt speaks from sad experience,—spending their precious lives and energies in Lecturing to a half-dozen of spiritless pupils, perhaps not quite so many as half-a-dozen, at Queen's. He then gets into a rhapsody with more or less vehemence, till we come to what he calls the master-difficulty,—religious division.

I must freely confess that I was curious to see how he would meet this difficulty; but the *Master of Arts* is for some pages rather mysterious; and before he ventures to solve the master-question, he amuses himself and his readers with a long irrelative discussion, intermixed however with a very few correct observations, which tell that his conscience and judgment are at variance with his wishes. How he can reconcile these observations with his scheme, which at length breaks out, is impossible for me to explain: perhaps the *Master of Arts* will attempt it in another pamphlet.

It would appear that he does not wish to get rid of religion altogether,—much less to have a *Girard College* in which the sound of religion shall never be heard nor a minister of religion ever enter. The people of Canada, he says, are not yet prepared for this, nor are they prepared to educate their sons in human learning, apart entirely from the lessons of Christianity. Now so far this is well. The *Master of Arts* further admits that the Provincial University must look for members in a great measure to those of the youth who aspire to the Christian Ministry; but he is no friend to a system by which these youthful candidates for the holiest of all offices would, before reaching the hands of those who may be appointed to conduct their Theological studies, be thrown loose for three or four years in an Institution whose characteristic is to be the absence of all religious

instruction; and the said *Master of Arts* admits that even King's College, bad as he thinks it, is better than this, since it is a benefit to a fraction of the population. After this he gets quite bold, and even pays some respect to the Church of England; and I was imbibing the thought that he had some vague notions of religion, when the cloven foot appeared in the plan he proposes, which is to place all denominations side by side, as if there was no truth in the Gospel.

The solution given by the *Master of Arts* is,—

1. That Theology shall form no part of the teaching of the University; but in order to provide for religious instruction and superintendence, there shall be—

2. Colleges professedly Theological and Denominational, placed beside the University and incorporated with it, in which the Students of each denomination, while receiving in common literary and scientific instruction provided by the public endowment, shall reside; enjoying simultaneously with the benefits of the University the advantages of religious superintendence; or in which, after their preliminary studies in the public classes of the University, and obtaining the degree of A. B., those who are intended for the Clerical profession in each denomination, shall proceed under Professors on the foundation of the Colleges, not of the University, with their strictly Theological studies. Here follows a string of advantages, shewing that unity is the natural result of confusion; that hostile and implacable divisions constitute the secret basis of harmony; and that the University Council, composed of Delegates from all Theological Religious Denominations in the Province, will be remarkable for its sobriety, meekness, concord, and sameness of purpose!

Now, the first objection to this scheme is, that it is the offspring of Infidelity, and in its consequences subversive of true religion; not that the *Master of Arts*, who has the hardihood to prepare it, would probably care

much for this, provided that the Church were reduced to a level with all Dissenting sects, and provided his share of the endowment was sufficient. But the second objection is still more fatal; the scheme is utterly impracticable. The collective Council of the University, made up of representatives from the Theological Colleges or increasing denominations of Protestants, would constitute the most complete bear-garden that ever was conceived, and would become an arena of presumption, ignorance, and violence. No Churchman or Roman Catholic could ever conscientiously sit in such a motley assemblage, which must ever be an object of ridicule instead of respect. Thus more than half the population must, from conscientious motives, be deprived of all the advantages of a Collegiate education; and indeed I question whether any sincere Christian, whatever his denomination might be, could in conscience identify himself with an Institution, founded on the monstrous dogma that truth and error are equal in value and importance.

The *Master of Arts*, after admiring the two leading principles of Mr. Baldwin's Bill of last Session, (which have, nevertheless, been condemned by all honest and Christian men), namely, the spoliation of the University of King's College, and the placing all denominations, that is truth and falsehood, on a perfect level, proceeds, for the sake of blinding his opponents, to attack with acrimony some insignificant details. This, however, has been so frequently done in a better style and with real sincerity, that I shall be readily excused for passing them over.

After all, the representation of the Colleges in the University Council and its working, seem to give the *Master of Arts* some little uneasiness; and he has on this important point many misgivings; and is evidently at fault, because fully aware that an explosion is more probable than harmony. He is, therefore, disposed to retain the test such as it is,—“Belief in the Inspiration

of the Scriptures and in the Doctrine of the Trinity;" but, unfortunately for his unity, this excludes the Unitarians, and so destroys his beloved principle of equality among all religious denominations; for the principle is as much broken by excluding one, as by confining the whole endowment or privilege to one.

The *Master of Arts*, who may after all have some piety at bottom, is compelled to drop Divinity degrees because he cannot introduce them in any decent manner; and then, like the fox with the grapes, he sets himself to prove that they are worthless.

With respect to giving the patronage of certain Professor's Chairs to British Universities, it is too ridiculous to require comment; and his sapient remarks, explaining away robbery and spoliation, are excellent indications of the purity of his morality, and of his fitness to instruct youth in the way of righteousness.

I have now gone through the pamphlet and taken up all its intelligible parts, and the result, as recommended by the *Master of Arts*, is a University like a vast Mechanics' Institution pouring its pestilential influence over the Colleges of the hostile denominations with which it is to be surrounded. Now such a Pandemonium would not survive its first year. Every honest heart would rise against it as equally offensive to God and man.

The scheme is not new: it has been tried on a small scale in Germany, where two different religious faculties, the Protestant and Roman Catholic, are attached to some few of the Universities in that country. More than two has not been attempted; it was reserved for the *Master of Arts* to propose a multitude of such faculties. At Tübingen University the Roman Catholics and Lutherans have each a Theological faculty. What is the result? Why, such unprincipled spectacles have reduced Protestant Germany to a mass of Infidelity; and yet religious rancour prevails more than ever, because there is no Christian charity to soften and harmonize it. The

less their religion, the more fierce their contention, and nothing but the power is wanting to restore the faggot and the stake.

The most effectual way of bringing our holy religion into contempt, is to try the scheme which the *Master of Arts* suggests: I say *try*; for it can never be reduced to practice, for if carried out, it would banish, as it has done in Protestant Germany, pure Christianity from the land. But it would be doing injustice to our people of every denomination to admit that such a scheme would be patronized by any one of them, as the rude concoction of the *Master of Arts* and his colleagues, blinded by the hope of endowments.

I now bid adieu to the *Master of Arts* and turn to the Members of the Church of England now in the Legislature; and I call upon them to consider well their baptismal vows, before they proceed to favour our rancorous enemies in oppressing the Church and her institutions. Had the Scotch Church procured from the King an endowment for a College at the time we did, would they have suffered it to be touched? or would the members of the Church of England have desired to touch it? Certainly not! And are we entitled to less favour? The Church asks only for bare justice, and no child of her's can deny her this without committing the most awful perjury. What would Great Britain have been at this day without her established religion? It is this, more than her armies and navies, commerce and riches, that has raised her to so great an eminence; and when she invades the Church her glory will soon pass away. Our holy Church treats with the greatest charity all denominations of professing Christians, however strict her own opinions may be; but for her own baptized children to fly in the face of their Mother, and to see her insulted and wronged, when they are able to prevent it by simply doing their duty, is a most aggravated crime. Stand forward, then, Gentlemen! in the protection of your

Mother: preserve to her the gifts freely granted to her by our late Sovereign, for the express purpose of teaching our youth religion and the sciences; at the same time that you respect the rights of those who have unhappily separated from her; and give them the means, if in your power, to educate their children as they shall desire; but be not unjust to your own household of faith!

To the French Members of the Legislature I would say:—Respect vested rights! Do not begin the revolutionary work of spoliation with the University of King's College, if you desire peace; for its endowment stands on firmer grounds than your own estates, and the power that can take the one may take the other. Are you so foolish as to suppose that when a wicked precedent is once made, your own Institutions will escape? The day may be somewhat distant, and the most forward of the enemies of King's College may flatter you with saying, that your case is different; but believe them not! Destroy King's College, and all the endowed Colleges and Religious Houses in Lower Canada, the tythes and all Church property, will soon be swept away; for there is no more injustice in all this than in destroying the University of King's College. Be assured that the party which destroys the one will, as soon as it is able, destroy all the rest!